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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A device for controlling the play of a card game among players using playing cards comprising:

an indicator card distinguishable from said playing cards, said indicator card inserted into a randomized stack of said playing cards, said indicator card including indicia thereon measuring the approximate depth within said stack at which said indicator card is inserted, said indicator card delineating the point in the conduct of said card game where additional players are permitted to join play of said card game and the point in the conduct of said card game where additional players are restricted from joining play of said card game.

2. (original) The device of claim 1 wherein said indicator card is visually distinguishable from said playing cards.

3. (cancelled)

4. (original) The device of claim 1 wherein said indicator card is tactilely distinguishable from said playing cards.

5. (original) The device of claim 1 wherein at least one dimension of said indicator card is equal to a corresponding dimension of said playing cards.

6. (original) The device of claim 5 wherein all dimensions of said indicator card are equal to the corresponding dimensions of said playing cards.

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7. (original) The device of claim 1 further comprising a stand receiving said indicator card.

8. (original) A method of conducting play of a card game among players using playing cards comprising:

providing an indicator card distinguishable from said playing cards;

inserting said indicator card into a randomized stack of said playing cards;

as said stack is depleted through play of said card game, permitting additional players to join play of said card game until said indicator card is reached and restricting additional players from joining play of said card game after said indicator card is reached, wherein play of said card game is conducted according a single fixed set of rules without regard to whether said indicator card is reached.

9. (currently amended) The ~~device~~ method of claim 8 wherein said indicator card is visually distinguishable from said playing cards.

10. (currently amended) The ~~device~~ method of claim 9 wherein said indicator card includes indicia thereon measuring the approximate depth within said stack at which said indicator card is inserted.

11. (currently amended) The ~~device~~ method of claim 8 wherein said indicator card is tactilely distinguishable from said playing cards.

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12. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein at least one dimension of said indicator card is equal to a corresponding dimension of said playing cards.

13. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein all dimensions of said indicator card are equal to the corresponding dimensions of said playing cards.

14. (original) The method of claim 8 further comprising:

providing a stand receiving said indicator card; and
when said indicator card is reached, displaying said card to players by placing said indicator card into said stand.

15. (original) A method of conducting play of a card game among players using playing cards according to the conventional rules of Blackjack in which the player makes an initial wager, the dealer deals an initial two-card hand to each of the player and dealer, one of the cards of the dealer's hand dealt face-up, and the player forms a final player hand, the method comprising:

providing an indicator card distinguishable from said playing cards;
randomizing said playing cards and forming said playing cards into a stack;
inserting said indicator card into said stack of playing cards;
conducting said Blackjack game and depleting said stack as playing cards are used;
as said stack is depleted through play of said card game, permitting additional players to join play of said card game before said indicator card is reached and restricting additional players from joining play of said card game after said indicator card is reached, wherein play of said card

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game is conducted according a single fixed set of Blackjack rules before and after said indicator card is reached.

16. (currently amended) The ~~device~~ method of claim 15 wherein said indicator card is visually distinguishable from said playing cards.

17. (currently amended) The ~~device~~ method of claim 16 wherein said indicator card includes indicia thereon measuring the approximate depth within said stack at which said indicator card is inserted.

18. (currently amended) The ~~device~~ method of claim 15 wherein said indicator card is tactilely distinguishable from said playing cards.

19. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein at least one dimension of said indicator card is equal to a corresponding dimension of said playing cards.

20. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein all dimensions of said indicator card are equal to the corresponding dimensions of said playing cards.

21. (original) The method of claim 15 further comprising:

providing a stand receiving said indicator card; and

when said indicator card is reached, displaying said card to players by placing said indicator card into said stand.